

VZCZCXRO0671
PP RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHAK #2365/01 2611505
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 181505Z SEP 07
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3781
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 1024
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0076
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU PRIORITY
RUEUITH/TLO ANKARA TU PRIORITY
RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 002365

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/18/2022

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: WILL CIVIL-MILITARY TENSIONS PLAY OUT IN
FOREIGN POLICY?

REF: A. ANKARA 0563

[1](#)B. ANKARA 1244

[1](#)C. ANKARA 1349

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) Since Abdullah Gul's elevation to the presidency on August 28, Turks have been parsing every interaction between him and the military to discern the future of military-government relations. Despite a peaceful, uneasy coexistence, military leaders are clearly alarmed by the AKP's overwhelming victory in July 22 elections and Gul's move to Cankaya. The Turkish General Staff (TGS) will scrutinize the AKP government's agenda for any sign of attempts to erode secularism or to reduce the role of the military. Through public statements and quiet pressure via allies in the secular opposition, media, and other institutions, the generals have, and may well continue to:

- discourage the government from engaging the Iraqi Kurdish leadership on PKK terror,
- resist initiatives on Cyprus important to Turkey's EU accession chances,
- oppose any compromise on the NATO-EU deadlock, where unfulfilled Turkish demands for a seat at the ESDP table risk NATO-EU cooperation in Afghanistan and Kosovo.
- oppose initiatives aimed at reconciliation with Armenia.

What is not so clear is the extent to which PM Erdogan's government is prepared to buck TGS pressure to pursue its goals. End Summary

Iraq -- No Talking to the Kurds

[1](#)2. (C) Earlier this year, Defense Chief GEN Yasar Buyukanit and other officers effectively turned off low-key talks between GOT officials and Iraqi Kurdish leaders, including Nechirvan Barzani, by publicly asserting that Kurdish leaders directly supported PKK terrorism (ref a). Buyukanit singled out KRG President Masoud Barzani as a possible Turkish target. A well-placed MFA contact also told us that the military has torpedoed any discussion of a UN role in the resolution of the Kirkuk issue (ref b). All of this has made it historically difficult and risky for the GOT to approach

KRG officials at any level.

Cyprus -- Perpetual Apple of Discord

13. (C) In October 2006, Buyukanit questioned a compromise formula on the opening of Turkish and Greek Cypriot ports that Erdogan proposed during EU consultations on the one-year anniversary of the start of Turkey's EU accession process. An embarrassed government was forced to withdraw the proposal. The military also opposed "TRNC President" Talat's decision to dismantle the Lokmaci bridge and subsequent efforts to open the Ledra Street crossing. Relations between the TGS and Talat's government continue to be poor. Military leaders have made no secret of their disdain for the Annan Plan and have given no sign of relaxing their tough line on Cyprus.

Cyprus and NATO -- Turkey Falling on Its Sword

14. (C) Cyprus continues to bedevil Ankara's policy on NATO-EU relations. Alone among the Allies, Turkey has insisted on defining civilian ESDP missions in Afghanistan and Kosovo as Berlin-Plus operations, which would effectively give it veto power over how these operations are planned and executed. Turkey has taken this action to force the EU to include Turkey in ESDP planning, override Cypriot objections to Turkish participation in the European Defense Agency, and prevent Cyprus from participating in these missions with Turkey. The military is clearly driving this troubling attempt to hold hostage EU missions in Kosovo and Afghanistan over Cyprus. In this instance, the Cyprus-indoctrinated

ANKARA 00002365 002 OF 002

Foreign Ministry seems to be a willing handmaiden; even if the diplomats felt otherwise, they would have no room to maneuver.

EU Relations -- Why Bother

15. (C) Military leaders here are among the more vocal critics of the EU accession process, seen by an increasing number of Turks as less a negotiation than the humiliating initiation rite of a club which does not really want them. Turkish generals believe the AKP government has made too many concessions to the EU on Cyprus, for little in return. They see the Europeans as having failed to reciprocate with direct trade, commercial flights to the north, or other measures to ease northern Cypriot isolation. Buyukanit and others have excoriated EU and NATO allies for their tolerance of pro-PKK television, radio, newspapers, front organizations and fundraising in their countries. They have noted that PKK activists arrested in Belgium, Germany and elsewhere have often been released. The TGS is convinced that the Europeans are not doing nearly enough to combat PKK terrorism despite pledges to do so, thereby revealing not-so-secret sympathies for PKK terrorists and a parallel desire to weaken and divide Turkey.

16. (C) European and Canadian attitudes on Armenian genocide allegations also rankle the uniforms. As the government urged calm after the French Assembly's passage of legislation criminalizing denial of an Armenian genocide last autumn, TGS Land Forces commander GEN Basbug stepped forward to announce the suspension of bilateral military relations with France and dis-invited French officials to Turkey's biennial defense industry fair. Some European allies and Canada have seen overflight clearances for operations in Afghanistan suddenly revoked and other military cooperation stalled over the Armenian genocide issue. Recently, French diplomats and military attaches were not invited to August 30 Victory Day celebrations.

Resisting an Opening to Armenia

¶17. (C) Quiet pressure from the military forced the government to back away from a plan to temporarily open the border to permit Armenian travel to Van for the March opening of a restored Akdamar Armenian Orthodox church there. The TGS has also resisted government initiatives to normalize relations with Armenia.

Comment

¶18. (C) Civil-military tensions may just remain a kind of "cold war." The influence of the General Staff is not consistent across the geopolitical spectrum; less of a military hand is seen in Turkey's Caucasus and Balkans foreign policy. In several areas of importance to us, including northern Iraq and Armenia, military assertiveness can harden government positions, foreclose options, and reduce flexibility. We will seek ways to use our bilateral military contacts to encourage military moderation in this regard. End Comment

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

WILSON